

IS YOUR FLOODPLAIN MANAGER CERTIFIED?

What follows is an announcement that will help your community to make the most of YOUR participation in the National Flood Insurance Program...

In the early 1990's, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, was facing the possibility of being placed on probation (by FEMA) for failing to comply with their obligations under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). City staff attended courses sponsored by the State and FEMA and became knowledgeable about floodplain management and their community's responsibilities under the NFIP. Mount Pleasant is now not only in good standing with the NFIP, but it is an active participant in the Community Rating System which has reduced the flood insurance premiums in the Town because of its exemplary floodplain management program.

Mount Pleasant is only one of hundreds of cases that have demonstrated how well-trained staff pays off. As a result, floodplain development is better managed, flood losses are reduced, property owners are better protected, there is compliance with State and Federal programs, and residents enjoy lower insurance premiums.

How do you know if your staff is adequately prepared for the job? Short of an assessment visit by FEMA or your state's NFIP coordinating agency, the best way to know they are competent is to encourage them to become Certified Floodplain Managers (CFMs[®]). Only with adequate training and education to gain knowledge in flood mapping, the requirements of the NFIP, building construction in flood hazard areas, administering floodplain management regulations, and related topics, can a person pass the rigorous certification exam. In order to maintain their certification, they must attend classes, workshops or home study courses to keep CFMs[®] up to date on new approaches, standards and programs for their community.

The Certified Floodplain Manager Program was established by the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) in 1999. The emphasis of the Program is on knowing the fundamentals of flood mapping, managing floodplain development, national and state standards, and how to apply them to a locally administered program. CFMs[®] have been defined as people *"who know their stuff."*

To become a CFM[®], a person should study the basics of floodplain management. These are found in courses conducted by FEMA, the states and ASFPM. The best single reference is the course material used for FEMA's course Managing Floodplain Development Through the National Flood Insurance Program (FEMA IS-9), which can be downloaded through a link on the ASFPM website (www.floods.org).

When a person is ready, he or she applies to take the exam, which is offered many times throughout the year at locations around the country, often in conjunction with a state training program or conference which prepares the person for the exam. The exam is three hours long and covers the gamut of topics that a local administrator needs to know. Application forms are available on the ASFPM website (www.floods.org).

In order for a Certified Floodplain Manager to continue to effectively serve his or her community, continuing education is necessary. Credits for this continuing education can be obtained by attending training, workshops/technical conferences or by

completing graded home study courses. CECs can also be obtained through web based training courses offered by our Partner, RedVector.com® ASFPM Members receive a discount when they link to RedVector.com® through the ASFPM website and use the ASFPM reference code. CFMs® must provide verification for completing continuing education during each two year renewal period, thus demonstrating their continuing competency in handling their community's floodplain program.

Today the CFM® Program boasts over 2,300 certified professionals nationwide. Employers of these CFMs® are now reaping the rewards of having staff that "know their stuff". Some communities have received additional credit under the NFIP Community Rating System. Other communities report they have less trouble with the construction industry because the staff is able to clearly explain the process and requirements of the local floodplain ordinance.

The CFM® Program has become an integral part of floodplain management around the country. In the state of New Mexico, it is a state law requirement that CFM® administer a community's floodplain ordinance, which are adopted to meet community obligations under the NFIP. In Arkansas, state law now requires local floodplain administrators to obtain continuing education.

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